



State of Louisiana

BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY
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PRESS RELEASE

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LA Continues Preparations for Rising Miss. and Atchafalaya Rivers

BATON ROUGE (April 30, 2011) – State and federal agencies in Louisiana continue preparations today for the expected May cresting of the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers, as several agencies are involved in a proactive strengthening operation of the Mississippi River levee south of Louisiana State University. This operation is designed to strengthen the levee in the area of River Road south of Brightside Lane.

An area continuing for approximately three miles has experienced sand boils and water seepage problems. Seepage occurs when water leaks through sand boils, which are lower strength soils in the levee. Repair efforts have addressed most of the problems in this levee section; however, a final section of the seepage area requires the additional strengthening. When the water height increases in the river, this increases the pressure on the boils causing water seepage and decreasing the strength of the levee.

The Pontchartrain Levee District, St. Charles Parish, Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Louisiana Department of Corrections, Louisiana State Police and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers are supporting this operation.

Governor Bobby Jindal said, "The Mississippi and Atchafalaya River levels are expected to increase for the next three weeks and that's why it's critical that we take steps right away to reinforce levee systems so we can protect communities from potential flooding. All state agencies are prepared to assist as we continue to aggressively monitor river levels."

Pontchartrain Levee District President Steve Wilson said, "We are conducting inspections of the levee system twice a day and will continue to work with state and federal officials to take proactive steps to address any vulnerability on the Ponchartrain Levee District system."

The operation involves laying a geotextile fabric over a levee section. The geotextile fabric allows some water to pass through while helping to strengthen the levee. Sandbags will be placed on the geotextile fabric for support and stability. The sandbags were filled by Hunt Correctional Institute and have been stockpiled in St. Charles Parish. Approximately 10,000 sandbags will be used for this mission.

The Louisiana State Police and Pontchartrain Levee District Police will monitor traffic in the area and assist with traffic control should the need arise. The operation will require the periodic closure of River Road.

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